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2. (amended) A deck structure of claim 1 wherein the first element is adhesively secured to the second element.

3. (amended) A deck structure of claim 1 wherein the the first element and the second element are each generally planar.

4. (amended) A deck structure of claim 1 wherein the fiber-reinforced composite material includes a material selected from the group including: KEVLAR, carbon fiber, and fiber glass.

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A2

6. (amended) A deck structure of claim 1 wherein the spline is aligned generally perpendicular to the joists.

7. (amended) A deck structure of claim 1 wherein the spline is aligned generally parallel to a joist.

8. (amended) A deck structure of claim 1 wherein the second element includes a rib structure.

9. (amended) A deck structure of claim 1 wherein the second element defines an interior region along at least a pair of edges.

10. (amended) A deck structure of claim 1 wherein the first element and the second element are equivalent in size.

11. (amended) A deck structure of claim 1 wherein the first element and the second element are generally square in shape.

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**Delete claim 12.**

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24. (amended) A deck structure comprising:

a deck frame including a series of joists;

a plurality of modular panels arranged in a substantially abutting relationship, each panel being of a layered construction including a top element and a bottom element, said top element

A3  
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being of a material providing substantial compressive strength and limited tensile strength, said bottom element being of a fiber-reinforced material, each panel having a groove; and

a spline engaging a pair of grooves of an adjacent pair of panels, said spline being secured to at least one of the joists to secure the pair of panels to the deck frame.

25. (amended) A deck structure according to claim 24 wherein the spline is aligned generally parallel to a joist.

26. (amended) A deck structure according to claim 24 wherein the spline is aligned generally perpendicular to a joist.

27. (amended) A deck structure according to claim 24 wherein each panel includes a plurality of grooves.

28. (amended) A deck structure according to claim 27 wherein each panel is engaged by a pair of splines.

A4  
41. (new) A method of building a deck structure comprising the steps of:

providing a deck frame including a series of joists;

providing a plurality of modular panels, each panel being of a layered construction including a top element and a bottom element, said top element being of a material providing substantial compressive strength and limited tensile strength, said bottom element being of a fiber-reinforced material, each panel having at least one groove;

providing a spline element;

placing a panel atop at least two joists of the deck frame;

inserting the spline element into a groove of the panel; and

securing the spline element to one or more joists to connect the panel to the deck frame.

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of:

42. (new) A method of building a deck structure of claim 41 further comprising the steps

providing a second spline element;

inserting the second spline element into another groove of the panel;

securing the second spline element to one or more joists.

43. (new) A method of building a deck structure comprising the steps of:

providing a deck frame including a series of joists;

providing a plurality of modular panels, each panel being of a layered construction including a top element and a bottom element, said top element being of a material providing substantial compressive strength and limited tensile strength, said bottom element being of a fiber-reinforced material, each panel having at least one groove;

providing a plurality of panel support elements;

attaching a pair of panel support elements to a pair of joists;

providing a spline element;

placing a panel upon the pair of panel support elements;

inserting the spline element into a groove of the panel; and

securing the spline element to one or more joists to connect the panel to the deck frame.

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